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AUTHOR Osguthorpe, Russell T.; Osguthorpe, Richard D.
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ABSTRACT

This paper recommends an approach to moral education that helps students become better learners while becoming better people. The approach rests on six assumptions: an overarching aim of schooling is to provide students with a moral education; moral education is accomplished through direct instruction; an indirect approach to moral education based on teachers' and learners' individual traits has the most potential for success; there are three individual teacher and student traits central to moral education (purity of intent, sincerity of effort, and openness to inspiration); both learners and teachers have moral obligations related to each of the three traits; and the degree to which teachers and learners fulfill these moral obligations determines the ultimate effectiveness of schooling. Although the assumptions recognize the place of planned curricula and spontaneous instruction in moral education, emphasis is given to the more tacit factors in a classroom: individual traits of teachers and learners. The paper describes a model that shows how the degree to which teachers and learners possess the three individual traits determines the degree to which teaching lifts and learning lasts. Brief examples of moral education in high school classrooms are described pertaining to each sector of the model. (Contains 11 references.) (SM)

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Learning to be Good while Becoming Good at Learning

Russell T. Osguthorpe

Brigham Young University

Richard D. Osguthorpe

University of Michigan

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Abstract

In this paper we recommend an approach to moral education that helps students to become better learners while becoming better people. The approach rests on six assumptions. Although the assumptions recognize the place of planned curricula and spontaneous instruction in moral education, emphasis is given to the more tacit factors in a classroom—the individual traits of the teacher and learner. We assert that three traits help students learn to be good while becoming good at learning: (1) purity of intent, (2) sincerity of effort, and (3) openness to inspiration. A model is described that shows how the degree to which teachers and learners possess these three traits determines the degree to which teaching lifts and learning lasts. Brief cases are then described for each sector of the model.

Learning to be Good while Becoming Good at Learning

Some view moral education as a separate content area such as mathematics, music, or art with its own subject-specific pedagogy. And if morality is viewed as a topic to be taught, content and methods can be identified to teach it directly. Some of these methods have religious roots that clergy and parents have used for centuries. But what about the role of moral education in the schools? Should schools use the same approach to moral education as families and churches? Or should education itself be viewed as a moral endeavor—a vehicle for helping students learn to be good while becoming good at learning?

The central premise of this paper is that moral development and educational success are inextricably connected—that truly effective teaching leads to mastery of some knowledge or skill while simultaneously drawing students closer to virtue. Such teaching, we suggest, *lifts* both student and teacher, and such learning *lasts* long after the classroom experience has ended. This is the type of teaching and learning we believe is necessary for our schools to improve.

To illustrate our approach, we begin by offering six assumptions about moral education. Following a description of each assumption, we describe a model that shows how students and teachers determine the moral outcomes of an educational experience. Finally, we include a teacher's reflections on four students who illustrate the four types of learning and teaching described in the model.

The following are six assumptions upon which our model is based:

1) *An overarching aim of schooling is to provide students with a moral education, i.e., to draw them closer to virtue while helping them master the curriculum.*
2) *Moral education is accomplished through direct instruction, i.e., prepared curricula and spontaneous instruction, but it is also an indirect result of teachers' and learners' individual traits.*
3) *An indirect approach to moral education based on the individual traits of teacher and learner has the most potential for success.*
4) *Individual traits central to moral education include purity of intent, sincerity of effort, and openness to inspiration.*
5) *Both the learner and the teacher have moral obligations related to each of the three traits.*
6) *The degree to which the teacher and learner fulfill these moral obligations determines the ultimate effectiveness of schooling.*

Assumption One: ***An overarching aim of schooling is to provide students with a moral education, i.e., to draw them closer to virtue while helping them master the curriculum.***

From its inception in the U.S., as well as in other nations, public schooling has aimed to help students become responsible citizens (Macedo, 2000). As Benjamin Barber (1992) has said,

> Public education is general, common, and thus in the original sense "liberal." This means that public education is education for citizenship. . . [in a democracy]. There is only one road to democracy: education. And in a democracy, there is only one essential task for the educator: teaching liberty. (p. 15)

The question, of course, is: what does it mean to teach liberty? Certainly it encompasses the teaching of responsibility, honesty, kindness, and civility. To be *civil* one must be polite, cultured, and educated but one must also have a desire to contribute to the public good. And such a desire cannot be mandated by a teacher or by the government. It must come from within. It must be a result of an individual's freedom to choose, an act of personal agency. This is the ultimate aim of any educational system in a democracy—to help its citizens learn how to choose to contribute to the public good.

To contribute to the public good, one must be caring as well as competent. Most parents and educators believe that teaching a child to be competent at something is far easier than teaching that same child to be honest and caring ( ). John Goodlad has asserted that educators can never separate their teaching from its moral implications—the use to which their students will put new knowledge:

> If education were merely some kind of training--such as to paddle a canoe, ride a bicycle, or even add numbers--we could afford to be somewhat relaxed about its context. Yet even under such circumstances, we cannot afford not to address the question of ultimate use. My incarcerated students in the industrial school for (delinquent) boys frequently offered to teach me the craft of lock picking. They offered no accompanying manual or lessons regarding the moral circumstances under which use of my new skill would be legitimate (see Soder, 1996, pp. 93-94).

Only in the twentieth century has society become more complacent about what Goodlad calls ultimate use. This complacency has manifested itself in a variety of ways: e.g., state and national testing on core curricula, competency-based and outcome-based pedagogies, fixation with the competitiveness of our

graduates in the global economy, etc. None of these movements in itself is intentionally against moral education. But taken together, they show the increased attention being paid to subject matter knowledge, and the reduced attention being given to the underlying moral dimensions of schooling.

Assumption Two: ***Moral education is accomplished through direct instruction, i.e., prepared curricula and spontaneous instruction, but it is also an indirect result of teachers' and learners' individual traits.***

Pritchard (1998) separates contemporary moral education programs into four primary categroies: *values clarification, moral development, modern character education,* and *multicultural education.* He concludes that the weakness inherent in the four programs is that each relies to some degree on relativism. None holds to a specific definition of what it means to be good or virtuous. And all four rely primarily on direct instruction to accomplish their aims.

Although Bennett, Finn, and Cribb (1999) do not recommend a specific program for teaching morals to public school pupils, they do suggest 12 "signs of good character education." (pp. 529-530) The "signs" indicate what educators should do, the steps they should take, to ensure appropriate moral development of their students. The first sign isolates certain virtues and sounds much like other structured programs: "[Educators should] try to teach basic virtues such as honesty, diligence, fairness, and loyalty." (p. 529) Few would argue with the basic premise that educators should try to teach such virtues. However, the question remains as to how such teaching should be accomplished.

Prepared curricula. Should the teacher spend a specified period of time each day delivering prepared moral education curricula—teaching students to be honest, diligent, fair, and loyal? Such programs are common in Europe and are becoming more common in the U.S. (see , Heidel, Lyman-Mersereau, & Janke,

1999), but there is little data to show that such programs are effective (McClellan,). If structured programs are not the ultimate answer, what are other approaches to moral education that schools should consider?

Spontaneous instruction. Teachers who do not use prepared curricula to teach principles of good conduct to their students teach moral principles every day. Many of these "lessons" emerge in the daily interactions between two students or between a student and the teacher. These spontaneous bits of instruction are given when a teacher sees a student breaking one of the accepted principles of moral conduct. A teacher recently recounted the following experience:

> At the end of the day I looked around the classroom and saw Cindy sitting on the floor crying. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Oh, Mark took my paper and wrote his name on it, and now I don't have anything to turn in." I walked over to where Mark was sitting and asked if I could talk with him in the back room. "Did you take Cindy's paper?" I asked. Staring at the floor, Mark replied, "Somebody put it in my backpack—I'm not sure how it got there." "But how did your name get on the paper?" I continued. "I'm not sure," Mark said.

This was the same boy who had written a fictitious name on a roll, the same one who had been accused of cheating on his assignments in the computer lab. He was obviously lying, but what should the teacher do—especially if he was unwilling to admit his mistake? Requiring him to read a book about the importance of honesty would likely not solve his problem.

After school she called Mark's mother and asked for a conference. The mother wanted to know if they could just handle it over the phone. The teacher persisted, "I would really like to talk with you in person if possible." "But what is it about?" asked the parent. "I've noticed some patterns of deception lately

with Mark, and I would like to talk with you about them" the teacher responded. But the parent was unconvinced, "We've never seen anything like that at home with Mark." But gradually the mother's resistance subsided, and she agreed to discuss the problem with the teacher.

This case shows the importance of spontaneous instruction in moral education. The teacher had no handbook to go to for direction about how to handle Mark's problem. But she also knew that she needed to do something—that her own example of honesty was not enough. She knew that she needed to link arms with the home if the problem was going to be solved, and so she called Mark's mother. The teacher was not about to let Mark get away with what was an obvious case of stealing and lying. She knew that if she did, Mark might only get worse. He needed to admit his mistake and begin working on correcting his behavior. And the home and school needed to find ways to help him overcome his problem. The power of Mark's case is that it was a unique, individual moral mistake that arose in the natural course of the school day—a mistake that needed immediate attention from adults who cared about Mark enough to help him see his behavior as wrong and develop the desire to correct it.

Individual traits. Although Mark's case is one of spontaneous, direct instruction, the power of the teacher's approach would have been lost if the teacher herself had been dishonest and uncaring. What if Mark had seen the teacher lie to the principal the day before she confronted Mark? And what if Mark had felt that the teacher did not care for him, that she was interested only in helping Cindy? The teacher would certainly not have been able to help Mark with his own honesty if Mark had viewed her as a dishonest person. And if she could barely tolerate Mark, or more pointedly if she could not tolerate him, Mark would likely not have accepted her help. He would have interpreted it as

just one more scolding and might have concluded that his only mistake was getting caught. The teacher's traits—her feelings toward Mark, her own commitment to honesty—were the most important factors in her ability to influence Mark for the good—even in this spontaneous direct encounter.

Assumption Three: ***An indirect approach to moral education based on the individual traits of teacher and learner has the most potential for success.***

Martin Buber (1965), the well-known Jewish philosopher, described the dilemma of trying to teach character development. He explains the relative ease of teaching a student to get the right answer to a math problem, but the challenge of teaching students not to envy, to bully, or to lie--

> I try to explain to my pupils that envy is despicable, and at once I feel that secret resistance of those who are poorer than their comrades. I try to explain that it is wicked to bully the weak, and at once I see a suppressed smile on the lips of the strong. I try to explain that lying destroys life, and something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying. I have made the fatal mistake of *giving instruction* in ethics, and. . . nothing of it is transformed into character-building substance. (p. 105)

Robert Coles (1993) tells a story about his own attempts to teach moral reasoning that have led him to the same conclusion as Buber. Coles describes how a former student, a Rhodes Scholar returned to tell Coles that he was unhappy with the education he had received at Harvard. In Coles' words:

> [The student] said, "Well, I've taken two courses in moral reasoning and I got A's in both of them."

So I said, "Congratulations, but I guess you've been getting A's in everything."

He said, "It really hurt to get A's in those courses."

I looked at him and said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, I got the A's in the two courses in moral reasoning, but I'm not a very good person. . . "

And I said, "Oh, we all have our downers every once in a while. We all feel kind of not so good about ourselves."

And he looked at me and he said, "Dr. Coles, when you can get two A's in courses called moral reasoning and you can do some of the things that I've done, you begin to wonder about those courses."

I said, "What have you done? . . . He then started telling me about the way he behaved with his roommates and with his girlfriend. And after I had heard this, I thought to myself, "He's absolutely right about himself."

. . . He [then] said, "It really matters to me that my mind can do such good work and that it doesn't connect with my conduct."

All I could do was thank the student. . .

[He then asked] "Well, what are we going to do about this." And I said, "Our entire lives are to be given over not only to contemplating this irony, but working hard to undo it. And maybe that's what education is about."

Both Buber and Coles agree that structured curricula on ethics or morals is not the most effective way to draw someone closer to virtue. Neither, however, suggests an alternative. Coles and his student are both confounded by the irony that one could master the concepts of moral living and then live an immoral life.

But within their encounter itself, we believe, lies the answer to their quandary. Their conversation was more than an academic discussion about topics taught in a course. Why did the student bring such a question to a teacher in the first place? And why bring it to this particular teacher? We suggest that the answer hinges on the traits of the teacher and the relationship of trust that had developed between teacher and student—a relationship that again hinged on the teacher's traits.

Coles' student had obviously been reflecting for some time on the incongruity between his behavior and what he had learned from Coles. But the student also trusted Coles enough to return to him and confess his mistakes. He likely knew that Coles would understand, that Coles would be honest with him, but that he would not condemn him. The student claimed that it was the conflict between receiving an "A" in the course and then going against everything the course had taught. We suggest, however, that it was Coles' personal qualities—his integrity mixed with care—that prompted the student to return to Coles for one last conversation.

Assumption Four: ***Individual traits central to moral education are purity of intent, sincerity of effort, and openness to inspiration.***

In his autobiography *Colors of the Mountain*, Da Chen (1999) describes the challenge as a young boy of entering Yellow Stone Elementary School without being able to pay the required tuition. As a son of a landlord, Da had been discriminated against since the day he was born, spat upon and ostracized by those in his community who were accepted members of the Communist party. In spite of his feelings of humiliation at being too poor to pay for his schooling,

he was determined to go to the school and pled to be admitted. He kept imagining that Mr. Sun, the teacher, would throw him out of his office. "The window was large and there was a patch of soft grass for landing." But Mr. Sun was unexpectedly accepting of Da:

"So you are Chen Da," he said, to my surprise.

"Yes sir. I have a problem."

"Don't we all."

"Excuse me?"

"I meant, we all have problems." He was smiling.

"Yes, well, you see, I only have fifty fens for the tuition. . ."

"And you want to register?"

"If I could."

"What's your story?"

"We're waiting for the piglets to grow."

"How big are the pigs?"

"Young."

"How young?"

"Not born yet." I waited for him to grab my neck and toss me out.

"Okay, write a note down here about the pigs and I will register you."

I looked at him in disbelief. A wave of gratitude swept through my heart. I wanted to kneel down and kiss his toes. There *was* a Buddha somewhere up there in the fuzzy sky. I took his pen and wrote the promise on a piece of paper."

"But I cannot give you the textooks no. It's a school rule."

"That's fine, I can copy them from others."

> "Well, if you don't mind, I was thinking maybe you could use my last year's copy, but it's messy, it has my handwriting all over the pages."
>
> If I didn't mind? Who was this guy? "A saint from Buddha's heaven?
>
> I was overwhelmed and didn't know what to say. I kept looking at my feet. I had rehearsed being thrown out the window, being slighted or laughed at but kindness?. . .I wasn't prepared for kindness. I nodded quickly, and ran off after saying a very heartfelt thank-you and bowing so deep that I almost rubbed my nose on my knees. (pp. 14-15)

Mr. Sun continued to take a special interest in Da Chen. He elected Da to be the class monitor, "a bold political decision," given that Da's family were not party members. Da was obviously disarmed at the teacher's kindness toward him. He knew that the teacher did not need to be nice to him. He also understood well that the teacher was being kind at some personal risk. It was this purity of intent that made the teacher's gestures so meaningful to Da.

But Da benefited from more than the teacher's intent. He was also the recipient of the teacher's efforts to integrate Da into a classroom in which other students could be potentially hostile toward Da. The teacher exerted himself to ensure that such hostility would not be permitted. Examining the encounter between Da and his teacher, one would also conclude that the teacher was figuring things out as he went along. He may have known beforehand that he would admit Da without the requisite tuition. But the teacher likely did not know precisely *how* he would respond—that he would offer the textbook to Da, and that he would elect Da to be class monitor. The teacher relied to some extent on intuition and inspiration to do the right thing for Da.

The teacher's openness, his sincere efforts to help, and the underlying purity of his intent combined to form the example the teacher set for his pupils, including Da. We believe that it is any teacher's example that draws students closer to virtue. Da's teacher's kindness made Da want to be kind. Coles' integrity made his student want to bring his actions and beliefs into conformity. In each case, it was the untaught lesson that taught most. Not that spontaneous instruction was unhelpful, not that prepared curricula had no effect. But the lessons that had the most impact, the ones that remained with students throughout their lives (i.e., Da recounted the experience with the teacher 30 years after it occurred) were the lessons learned by observing traits of the teacher.

Assumption Five: ***Both the learner and the teacher have moral obligations related to each of the three dimensions,*** **and**

Assumption Six: ***The degree to which the teacher and learner fulfill these moral obligations determines the ultimate effectiveness of schooling.***

Most approaches to moral education focus on the responsibilities teachers have to their students. Although these are the responsibilities that ed schools must emphasize as they prepare teachers, what about the learners' responsibilities? What obligations do learners have, and how similar are these obligations to those of the teacher? Table 1 illustrates the reciprocal nature of moral obligations shared by learner and teacher.

Table 1. Moral Education

		Learner	
		Toward Virtue and Learning	Away from Virtue and Learning
Teacher	Toward Virtue and Good Teaching	1 Teaching lifts Learning lasts	2 Teaching lifts Learning doesn't last
	Away from Virtue and Good Teaching	3 Teaching doesn't lift Learning lasts	4 Teaching doesn't lift Learning doesn't last

The first box shows the ideal case where both learner and teacher have pure intent, exert sincere effort, and open themselves to inspiration. These conditions draw both learner and teacher closer to virtue. The teacher cares about the student and the student wants to learn. When they encounter difficulty, they do not lose faith in themselves or in each other. Regardless of the challenges that learning and teaching bring, they have confidence that they will succeed. And eventually, they do—both in the topic being pursued and in their ability to understand and live what is good and true.

The second box illustrates the situation in which the teacher has pure intent, exerts sincere effort, and is open to inspiration, however, the learner resists. Such learners know that the teacher cares for them, but they refuse to engage wholeheartedly in the learning experience. Learners may pretend to complete an assignment when in fact they are doing something else. They may try to deceive the teacher but are actually deceiving themselves. The teacher is not taken in by a learner's deceptive behavior and continues to try to "reach" the student.

The third box is the most complex situation. The teacher does not care for the students, exerts effort that is insincere, and rejects the insights that could help students, but the students are still determined to learn. In some cases, the students initially have a very negative experience with the teacher and the topic because of the impurity of the teacher's intent. But gradually, the students see beyond the poor teaching and rise above it. They learn in spite of the teacher. In other cases, students' intents are so pure, their effort so sincere, that they immediately compensate for the teacher's lack of interest in them and in the topic. They forgive the teacher and move on with their learning because they have discovered how to cope with even the most misdirected teaching. Some of the learning that lasts comes only after years of experience and reflection. Some learning comes immediately. In some instances, the student's later reflection changes a once negative experience into something positive. Students are drawn closer to virtue by placing the negative experience in context, comparing it to other more positive learning experiences, and vowing to move beyond it—to become a new person.

Box four illustrates the worst of all cases. In this situation the learner and teacher are in collusion with each other: "I won't tell on you if you won't tell on me." They may despise one another, or they may pretend to care for each other and the topic. They have little interest in succeeding and close themselves off to the very sources of knowledge they need most. Each wants only to get through the experience, to check it off of their to-do list, to get it behind them so they can move on to something they really like. But they refuse to confess their true feelings to themselves or to each other. This self-betrayal draws each away from virtue, making each a lesser person. The only way out is through truth telling, through commitment to change, through redemptive acts.

Examples of Moral Education in a High School Classroom

The following four accounts of teacher-student relationships are drawn from the second author's experience. Each account illustrates one of the teaching and learning categories described in Table 1. Though the statements of student learning rely heavily on inference, each is based on interactions that took place over a period of at least one full school year while teaching high school French. The names of the students have been changed.

Example #1: Teaching lifts and learning lasts. The teacher-learner relationship that I had with Rosa best describes teaching that lifts and learning that lasts. Rosa was a first year French student. She was quiet and reserved but willing to participate in classroom discussion. I could always count on her to ask questions and she was always prepared with an answer to the questions that I posed.

Rosa's intent was pure, her efforts sincere, and she opened herself to inspiration. It became clear that Rosa wanted to learn French and that she was motivated by desires that extended beyond grades and report cards. The purity of her intent was evident in the questions she asked. The work she submitted showed the sincerity of her efforts. And the way that she interacted with her fellow students and with me showed how she opened herself to inspiration.

Rosa asked meaningful, thoughtful questions. When she was troubled by something I had explained, her brow would furl, she would look up at me in dismay, let out a small sigh, look back down at her notes, think for a moment, gather her thoughts and then ask me for clarification or for another explanation of the concept I had just taught. I thrived on her questions. I knew that if she did not understand, the other students did not understand, and I needed to go back and find a different way to teach the concept. She was not interested in just getting by and doing the work that was required for an "A." Rosa wanted to learn French and was excited about the opportunity. It was not until the end of the year that I learned that she would be returning to her native Columbia and that she had taken the course just because she wanted to learn French. She would not be able to study the language at her new high school because it was not offered, but before returning home, she wanted an introduction to the language that she hoped to master later in life. Rosa's intent was pure.

Rosa took great pride in her work. She took great care in completing her assignments and consistently did extra work that related the different concepts we had encountered during the year. She enjoyed doing the homework and made an effort to understand why she was doing each assignment. She wanted

to know how it was going to help her learn French, not how it was going to help her get a good grade. Rosa's effort was sincere.

Rosa was respectful of me as a teacher and of her fellow students. She usually mastered new concepts quite quickly. Rather than engaging in some unrelated activity, Rosa chose to help her classmates learn the material that she had already mastered. Rosa often helped Ashley, who had trouble understanding any new concept. She could reach Ashley in a way that had not been possible to me.

Ashley made small incremental changes throughout the year, and as she allowed me to help her, we witnessed a complete change in her classroom demeanor. She began to answer questions and risk the possibility of being wrong. She worked harder, turned in her work on time, and became excited about learning. Rosa might have chosen to write a note to a friend do homework for another class, or even do the homework assignment that I assigned at the end of class. Instead she helped others. Logic says get ahead and do your homework, inspiration says reach out and help those in need. Rosa opened herself to inspiration and shared what she had learned with others.

Rosa'a pure intent, sincere effort, and openness to inspiration led to learning that lasts. During the year I was amazed at her ability to recall previously taught material. Though Rosa may not have been conscious of it, she learned in ways that caused her to retain new concepts. She asked meaningful questions, personalized the work, and taught it to others, thereby ensuring mastery of the material that was being taught, and learning that would last.

It was not difficult to care about Rosa. Her desire to learn helped me to improve my teaching. I wanted to help her learn. She would have had a good

experience in the course with or without me, but her commitment to her learning somehow strengthened my commitment to my teaching.

As I prepared my lessons each night, I thought of my first-year students. I reflected on what we had learned that day and then developed a plan for the next day. I was sometimes frustrated by my students' lack of attention, motivation, or effort, but I always tried to find a better way to present the next day's material. My intent was to prepare a lesson that would enable everyone to learn. I was not always successful, but Rosa and other students often inspired me to do my best. I always tried to prepare by anticipating the questions Rosa might ask and develop a plan that would enable her to understand.

Learning a language is a different experience for everyone. As much as I tried to incorporate every learning style into my teaching, I always came up short. Thus, I depended on my students to ask questions so that I could get "inside their heads" and understand their misconceptions. This was not always easy for me. For example, I struggled at first to respond to Rosa's questions in helpful ways. As I pondered what the problem might be, it came to me that she might be confusing some things with her native Spanish. As I probed more deeply, I began asking her how she would say a French word or phrase in Spanish. That is when the floodgates opened. She saw the connections between her native Spanish and the French we were learning in class, and her French improved dramatically.

The more improvement Rosa experienced in her ability to learn French, the more I seemed to experience an improvement in my teaching. And as the year progressed, I believe that we were also becoming better people--more committed, more caring, more open, more confident in our ability to succeed.

Learning a language was the vehicle drawing us closer to virtue because we were fully invested in the task for the right reasons. We experienced teaching that lifts and learning that lasts.

Example #2: Teaching lifts but learning doesn't last. John was as bright a student as I had ever encountered during my two years as a teacher. He was a little rowdy at times, but that did not affect his ability to grasp the material. What took others an hour to understand, John understood in five minutes. Unfortunately John never applied himself in a meaningful way. I am convinced that his learning did not last. His intent was not pure, nor his effort sincere. He was closed to inspiration.

John had great ability, but he only wanted to learn enough to get an "A" and move on. He sometimes struggled to get good grades as he tried to balance school and goofing off. But the balance point often eluded him. He chose to sacrifice his learning for popularity. I imagine John subconsciously decided at some point to get the other students' attention by joking around, instead of getting the teacher's attention by learning. However, he still learned some French—but only enough to get by. His intent was impure.

Whenever John finished early, I asked him to help others, but he usually sought attention in other ways. He looked for the shortest way to complete an assignment, and when I gave instructions, he found a loophole that turned the assignment into something worthless. His work never showed any desire to learn, nor did he make any effort to use his ability to increase his understanding of French. Intellectually he was ahead of his classmates, but he did not exert a fraction as much energy as most students. His effort was insincere.

John was not too concerned about any insights or inspiration that might come his way. He completed his assignments quickly and spent the rest of the time seeking the attention of others through behavior that was not conducive to learning. He was not open nor did he want to be. He was blessed with enough to get by, and that is all he wanted from school and from me.

Strangely enough I had a great relationship with John. I imagine that I was one of his favorite teachers. He and a friend always came to visit after school and distract me from my work with other students. He knew that I loved him as a person, and he knew I would discipline him if he acted up. For some reason he enjoyed this type of attention from me, and I gave him as much as I could offer. However, I could never get him to apply himself in a meaningful way. I was trying to teach in ways that lift, and John knew that I cared for him.

No matter how hard I tried, nothing seemed to work. Whenever I said something to discipline him, he would say "I know you love me Mr. O, just admit it." His comments were followed by a smile and then I would smile too. He was right. I also tried to sit him down privately and talk about ways that he could sincerely apply himself, but that too did not work. I expressed my love through caring, and he expressed his through attempts to "bother" me. He cared about me but he did not care about learning. However, I feel that all of my efforts were not in vain.

Example #3: Teaching doesn't lift but learning lasts. I feel that Adam, John's best friend, best illustrates this example. I hate to admit it, but Adam sometimes bothered me. He tried too hard to be like John and he somehow got on my nerves. My relationship with Adam did not always fit into this category,

but at moments it did. Unfortunately, I did not help a student who was at times trying to learn.

Adam showed his pure intent by taking a class he did not need to fill a requirement. He really wanted to learn the language. He had taken a beginning French course at his previous school and expressed on the first day in my classroom how frustrated he had become because he "did not learn anything." His sincere effort was evident in his classroom behavior and in his willingness to risk wrong answers in front of his peers. I am not sure if he was open to inspiration. A clear-cut example does not come to mind. Adam had his good and bad moments, but he was usually motivated and looked to me for guidance.

Unfortunately, I did not always offer Adam guidance in ways that lift. There were moments of such teaching, but more often I treated Adam like a student that needed discipline. I was sometimes harsh with him and tried to put him in his place. I did not tolerate any misbehavior from him. I did not allow him the same privileges that I allowed other students (i.e. talking during an assignment, yelling an answer out, laughing and joking around). I treated him unfairly.

At first I thought I was treating him this way to help him become a better student. He could have excelled, but he chose to be slightly above average. I wanted better from him, but at some point my good intentions turned to ineffective teaching. When I "got on his case" I was no longer doing it for his own good. It just became habit for me. I did not care about him as I should have. I let his jokes and pranks get to me instead of incorporating them into the class. I did not teach to lift, I sometimes taught to tear down. But somehow,

through it all, Adam learned a lot of French in spite of our less than optimal relationship.

Example #4: Teaching doesn't lift and learning doesn't last. The situation that best fits this example is my interactions with Jennifer. Jennifer was not my favorite student, and as I learned later, she hated all of her teachers. Unfortunately I was no different in her eyes. She was mean spirited and caused a great deal of tension in the classroom that involved fellow students and the teacher. She was the same in every class, but I was determined to make a bad situation good. It did not work.

Jennifer was actually a fairly bright student. She learned the French language faster than most of her peers, but she had already taken French from the previous teacher before getting kicked out. Her intent was usually not pure. Some days she wanted to put down her classmates. Other days she was quite pleasant and willing to help. But her efforts seemed insincere. She usually completed assigned work so that I would congratulate her and recognize her in front of the class. Because she was months ahead of everyone else at the beginning of the year, I began to hold her to a higher standard. At first she enjoyed the attention, but as soon as she began to make mistakes, she would get angry and literally curse me for not teaching her the material. I never noticed any openness to inspiration. There were days when I enjoyed being with her, but usually I dreaded it.

I did not make much of an effort to "lift" her. I became frustrated with her dominance in the class and her need for attention. By the middle of the semester tension developed between her and me and between her and other classmates. She said some harsh things that I did not tolerate. I did not bother finding out

what was wrong. I just punished her and left her alone, trying not to interact with her in any way.

I spoke with Jennifer's other teachers, and instead of trying to find a solution, I took consolation in the fact that the other teachers were having an even worse time with her in class. One teacher told me that Jennifer had written an essay about how the only class she liked was French! However, she did not make this known to me in any way. She transferred at the semester, and I did not make any effort to retain her. In fact I was excited about the prospect of teaching that class without her.

I saw Jennifer in the halls from time to time over the next year and a half and our greetings were cordial. In fact, they became quite friendly. For that reason I am glad that I never expressed how displeased I was with the animosity she showed me during class. Deep down, I cared about her, and she understood that—just as I knew that she was angry at the world and not at me (though she directed that anger at me). She felt picked upon and deservedly so. She had not been given a fair shake in life--which leaves me wondering what might have happened had I been the first adult to offer her that fair shake and then persevere through her onslaught of mean spirited remarks. One day, I may have been able to "lift" her and myself in the process. Instead we sank to a depth I had never before encountered in a teacher-student relationship.

Conclusion

In this paper we have offered six assumptions that underlie a model that leads to teaching that lifts and learning that lasts, a model that treats moral education not as a separate topic in the curriculum, but as the most effective way

to teach and learn any topic in the curriculum. We have illustrated the assumptions and the model with examples from the literature on moral education and the reflections of a classroom teacher.

In a future paper we will describe in more detail the implications of the model for teaching practice. This paper will focus on the fifth assumption—the moral obligations of teachers and learners related to each of the three individual traits. Included in this paper will be descriptions of how educators and students through reflective practice can apply the model in their schools and classrooms to become better learners and better teachers.

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